category-wise in Solapur district as on 30-6-91.

OYT	752
Non OYT Spl.	640
Non OYT Gen.	5731
Total	7123

(b) Expansion plans have been drawn for clearing the waiting list progressively during the Eighth Plan period. At Solapur an expansion of existing electro mechanical exchange by 1200 lines has been planned for 1991-92.

Sutlej-Yamuna link Canal Project

2198. SHRI RAM SINGH RAO : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the work completed on the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal Project; and

(b) the time by which the Project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) The details of work completed on the Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal Project are as under:—

Item	*Unit*	*Total Quantity*	*Quantity completed by June 1990*
1. Earthwork	lakh cubic metre	440.75	428.82
2. Lining	lakh sq. m.	53.22	50.65
3. Major cross Drainage works .	Nos.	11	10
4. Medium Cross Drainage works	Nos.	41	37
5. Village Road Bridges . .	Nos.	58	50
6. National Highway Bridges .	Nos.	5	5
7. State Road Bridges . .	Nos.	10	6
8. Railway Bridges . . .	Nos.	3	1 (only linking of tracks is to be done in remaining 2 bridges.)

Work was in progress in July 1990 on the remaining structures as also in the reach km 67—km 81, which was damaged in the 1988 floods, and the reach km 2.54 to km 3, where resectioning was to be done, when work came to a halt following the killing of the Chief Engineer and a Superintending Engineer.

(b) The Government of Punjab have been advised to engage appropriate agency/agencies to complete the balance works. The time schedule for completion will depend on the nature and the capacity of the new agency/agencies that will be engaged by the Government of Punjab.

Passport Applications Pending in Regional Passport Offices, Kerala

2199. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA:

SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:

SHRI P. C. THOMAS:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of passport applications pending in Regional Passport Offices in Kerala, Office-wise;

(b) the reasons for their pendency;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to expedite their disposal;

(d) whether there is a shortage of staff at Cochin Regional Passport Office;

(e) if so, the measures taken by the Government in this regard;

(f) whether there is any proposal to open any new passport office in Kerala; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Applications pending in Regional Passport Offices in Kerala are as under as on 26-7-1991:

Kozhikode	38071
Cochin	50181

(b) Reasons for pendency are given in the attached statement-I

(c) Information is given in the attached statement II.

(d) and (e) The measures taken by the Government in this regard are indicated in the attached statement III.

(f) and (g) A proposal has been received to upgrade Passport Liaison Office, Trivandrum to a Passport Office to cater needs of Passport applicants from Pathanamthitta, Quilon and Trivandrum districts of Kerala.

STATEMENT I

The reasons for pendency are as follows:

(1) Delayed receipt of Police and CID reports;

(2) Heavy increase in receipt of applications;

(3) Ban on recruitment to strengthen the staffing position and slow progress of computerization due to financial constraints.

STATEMENT II

The steps taken by the Government to expedite disposal of passport applications are enumerated below:

1. Following categories of applicants have been exempted from requirement of Prior Police and CID verification before issue of passports to them;

(a) All Government servants and Employees of Public Sector Undertaking who along with their applications submit NO OBJECTION CERTIFICATE (NOC) and Verification Certificate signed by their Head of Department on official stationery.

(b) Where an applicant submits his application accompanied with a verification certificate signed by either:

(i) a Deputy Secretary to the Government of India and above;

(ii) a Joint Secretary and above to a State Government;

(iii) a Sub-Divisional Magistrate and above;

(iv) District Superintendent of Police and above;

(c) Retired Gazetted Government Servants.

(d) Former Members of the Union Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha) and State Legislatures (Assemblies and Councils).

2. In all other cases where Regional Passport Officers/Passport Officers are otherwise satisfied with genuineness of applicant, a passport may be issued where Police and CID do not send their reports in 4 weeks after despatching personal particulars forms to them.

3. Children below the age of 15 years may be issued passport without police verification.

4. Persons holding normal passports may be issued with fresh passports after 10 years of its validity without prior Police CID verification.

5. Furthermore, in order to ensure expeditious clearance monitoring of Passports issued and pending is done through weekly progress reports in respect of each Passport Office.

6. With effect from 16th August, 1990, fresh passports are being issued for a period of ten years at a stretch so that a passport holder need not visit a Passport Office for renewal after first five years as was the case before August, 1990.

STATEMENT III

(d) Yes, sir, there is a shortage of regular staff at Cochin Passport Office.

(e) Since there is a ban on creation of posts, additional posts, commensurate with work-load could not be got sanctioned. It will be difficult to get additional regular staff while the current financial constraints continue. In the meantime, to mitigate the shortage of staff, Passport Office, Cochin has been allowed to engage casual workers and give incentives like overtime allowance to the staff to clear the backlog.

Communication Facilities in Pauri Garhwal and Chamoli Districts on U.P.

2200. SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to expand the Post and telecommunication facilities in Pauri Garhwal and Chamoli districts of Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the steps contemplated by the Government to provide telegram/telephone facilities in these areas?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) There are 13 numbers of telephone exchanges in Pauri Garhwal and 16 numbers in Chamoli districts out of which 4 numbers of Telephone exchanges have been replaced by electronic type in Pauri Garhwal and 5 in Chamoli district in 1990-91. 6 numbers of exchanges have been planned to be replaced by electronic type in Pauri Garhwal and 9 in Chamoli district in 1991-92. The remaining exchanges are expected to be replaced during the rest of Eighth Plan period. There are 1214 & 632 Gram Panchayats in Pauri Garhwal and Chamoli districts respectively. There are 43 & 44 numbers of Long Distance Public Telephones (LDPTs) with Telegram facilities respectively in the above two districts. 163 & 80 numbers of LDPTs are planned to be opened during 1991-92 in Pauri Garhwal and Chamoli districts respectively. There is one telegraph office each in both districts.

Group Farming Schemes

2201. SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of crops grown in Kerala under the Group Farming Scheme:

(b) whether the Government propose to implement Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the development of rice and vegetable cultivation in Kerala: and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Under the Group Farming Scheme in Kerala, rice, coconut, pepper and vegetables are covered.

(b) and (c) For the development of rice, Centrally Sponsored Scheme, "Integrated Programme for Rice Development (IPRD)" and for vegetables, "Central Sector Scheme on Production